

Admiral John Richardson, CNO
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Admiral Richardson: If you look at the slide, it talks about the Regional Seapower Symposium of the Mediterranean and Black Sea. I think it's a tribute to the architects of this conference and this vision that we have clearly extended well beyond the Mediterranean and Black Sea. You just have to look around this room. Look to your left and right. To know that the only region that we can identify that unites us all is that we are deeply connected by our interests in the sea.

I also want to highlight Admiral [Giradeli's] comment that stressed the linkage between naval forward presence and internal security. National security. And that this presence is proportional to the security interests and the prosperity interests of each country. That's very true. Particularly as Admiral [Giradeli] continued to note, as we enter into an era of increasingly competitive times.

Just a couple of facts to pick up on that.

In the last 25 years the amount of traffic, the amount of maritime traffic on the sea has increased by 400 percent, which is an amazing figure if you think about the fact that mankind has been going to sea for tens of thousands of years, and to see that quadrupling in the last quarter century as every nation moves to the sea for access to resources and markets.

In that same period of time, in the last 25 years, the amount of food that we get from the sea has increased by a factor of ten. Ten-fold. Both in protein and in carbohydrates.

It was pointed out earlier that information -- we talk about the cloud, right? Cloud-based computing. And when you think about a cloud, you look up. But the fact of the matter is, that 99 percent of that information rides on cables that are on the bottom of the oceans. So we should be not talking about a cloud of information, we should be talking about a sea of information. We should be looking down.

The other dynamic that's been mentioned is that the Arctic, right? The Arctic Ice Cap is the smallest it's been in any of

our careers. In fact it's the smallest it's been since we've been measuring. So it's been a very dynamic quarter century in the maritime environment, in the maritime domain. And all of that traffic, all of that dynamism provides pressure, increases the pressure, it increases the level of competition.

And in these times it's been pointed out many times by previous speakers, nobody can compete successfully on their own. We must choose partners. Partners with whom to cooperate, partners with whom to collaborate, partners with whom to interoperate. And by doing so we make each other stronger by working together. Working together in exercises, working together in joint deployments, personnel exchanges, educational opportunity, attending each other's schools, and in so many other ways.

By virtue of doing that, we come to share common views about how to operate in this global commons that we call the sea. Not only in matters of security, not only in matters of prosperity, but also in matters of legality, a common understanding and adherence to a rules-based approach to operating in these commons.

And while I take the point that maritime situational awareness may not be necessarily kinetic activity, it's information based activity. I would say that building capacity in our partners is very kinetic. It's beyond this conference, beyond the walls of this beautiful facility. It matters about what we do together on the high seas in every ocean from the sea floor to space.

So the U.S. Navy's approach to this has been consistent for the last 70 years, reflecting America's global interests. Today the U.S. Navy has 100 ships forward deployed, including now three carrier strike groups with their embarked air wing; three amphibious ready groups with their embarked marine expeditionary units; 66,000 sailors around the world forward deployed.

To do what? What do we do with this force? Well, we enhance security. We promote prosperity. And we advocate for legality. And as we have done in the last 70 years, just about everything we do we do with our partners. And by virtue of that joint interoperation, we build capacity that makes us both stronger. And within plus or minus a week, that forward deployed U.S. Navy force will be working with partners around the world. The snapshot today, 19 exercises around the world in every theater -- in Europe, in the Middle East. We'll do exercises in the Pacific and we'll do exercises with our partners on the East and West Coast of the United States. And those 19 exercises just in

this three-week snapshot, will allow us to work with over 30 partner nations, enhancing our mutual capability.

So we're there. We're there in every ocean around the globe. We're there protecting our interests, promoting our interests, and promoting the interests of our partners. We do so in exercise and operations that span from relatively simple pass ex's, passing exercises, maritime awareness exercises, information sharing exercises, all the way up to very sophisticated, high-end warfare. Missile defense, integrated air and missile defense with our partners. We've been there for 70 years, and we will be there in the future.

I must share a caution. Some accidents with the United States Navy have shown that you can stretch too far. You can take your eye off the fundamentals if you concentrate only on one aspect of our mission. How are we approaching this? Well, as we do everything else. We dive in, we do a full investigation. Throughout we are thorough and transparent. And when we're complete with this effort, we'll be stronger. And when we pick up those lessons, as always, we'll share those with our partners as well and hopefully make you stronger.

And so in closing, this is what I believe. Partners build mutual capacity by sharing what we learn. By virtue of that we make our partners stronger and we make ourselves stronger.

I look forward to continued partnerships that lead to mutual security, lead to continued adherence to rules-based order and legality, and to mutual prosperity. I would hope that in the United States Navy would find no better partner and no more formidable competitor.

I look forward to discussing this more at lunch. Perhaps during the question and answer period. And thank you very much again for your time today. Thank you.

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